

Statements of the ICPM Exploratory Open-ended Working Group on Phytosanitary Aspects of GMOs¹, Biosafety, and Invasive Species

13-16 June -- FAO, Rome

PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND ACTIVITIES OF THE IPPC

1. The purpose of the Convention is “*to secure common and effective action to prevent the spread and introduction of pests of plants and plant products, and to promote appropriate measures for their control*”. (Art 1.1). This is done with the desire to provide a framework for the development and application of harmonized phytosanitary measures and the elaboration of international standards, and taking into account internationally approved principles governing the protection of plant, human, and animal health, and the environment.
2. Plants are not limited to cultivated plants and protection is not limited to direct damage from pests. The IPPC definition of a pest is “*any species, strain or biotype of plant, animal or pathogenic agent injurious to plants or plant products*”. The coverage of the IPPC definition of plant pests includes weeds and other species that have indirect effects on plants. Therefore the scope of the Convention applies to the protection of wild flora resulting in an important contribution to the conservation of biological diversity.
3. The IPPC provides for rights and obligations supported by a system of standards and procedures for identifying pests that threaten plant health, assessing their risk, and determining the strength of measures to be used against their introduction and spread. Under the IPPC, most countries have established regulatory organizations experienced in assessing and managing the risk of pests that threaten plant health.
4. Although the IPPC clearly has applications to the spread of pests associated with international trade, the Convention is not limited in this respect. International cooperation in many forms falls within the scope of the Convention. The IPPC works collaboratively with other relevant organizations to avoid duplication and encourage harmonization for the implementation of obligations under other instruments.

ROLE OF THE IPPC REGARDING LMOs/PRODUCTS OF MODERN BIOTECHNOLOGY

The Working Group:

5. **Notes** that, consistent with the IPPC mandate to protect plant health, plant pest concerns that may be presented by LMOs/products of modern biotechnology fall within the scope of the IPPC.

¹ The working group considered that the term “LMOs/products of modern biotechnology” was more appropriate than GMOs. Living Modified Organism (LMO) is defined by the CBD in the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

6. **Notes** that IPPC risk analysis and management systems are appropriate for assessing and managing, if necessary, the direct or indirect risks of pests to cultivated and wild flora and plant products that may be presented by LMOs/products of modern biotechnology.
7. **Notes** that IPPC systems and procedures are relevant to, and adequate for, managing the risks posed by LMOs/products of modern biotechnology as they relate to the protection of plant health.
8. **Notes** that the existing national mechanisms and structures for phytosanitary systems may form a basis or a model for developing other practical approaches to managing risks associated with LMOs/products of modern biotechnology.

THE NECESSITY OF DRAFTING INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR
PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES REGARDING LMOs/PRODUCTS OF MODERN
BIOTECHNOLOGY

The Working Group:

9. **Notes** that plant pest risks associated with LMOs/products of modern biotechnology fall clearly within the scope of the IPPC.
10. **Recommends** the development of a supplementary standard to specifically address the plant pest risks of LMOs/products of modern biotechnology.
11. **Recommends** that this standard be developed as a matter of urgency.
12. **Recommends** that the Terms of Reference for the expert working group developing this standard include a review to identify the plant pest risks associated with LMOs/products of modern biotechnology and then to further identify areas within pest risk analysis (PRA) standards that are not adequately addressed.
13. **Recommends** that the IPPC Secretariat cooperate with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat and ensure that appropriate information on the IPPC is provided to appropriate meetings on the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the CBD.
14. **Recommends** that the Interim Standards Committee not re-open the September 1999 draft ISPM *Pest risk analysis for quarantine pests* (under country consultation at the time of the working group meeting) to incorporate provisions for LMOs/products of modern biotechnology but consider adding a reference to the development of a supplementary standard.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INVASIVE SPECIES AND QUARANTINE PESTS

The Working Group:

15. **Notes** that species that may be invasive and that directly or indirectly affect plants or plant products or that may be used as biological control agents should be assessed, monitored and managed if necessary according to IPPC provisions and standards.

16. **Notes** that those species that are identified under paragraph 15 and that are absent (not present) from an area (or if present, are limited in distribution and subject to official control) should be considered quarantine pests and should be subjected to measures according to IPPC provisions and standards.

ROLE OF THE IPPC REGARDING ALIEN INVASIVE SPECIES

The Working Group:

17. **Notes** that the IPPC provides for rights and obligations, and has established standards and procedures that are designed to prevent the introduction and spread of pests of plants and plant products, which include invasive species.

18. **Notes** that the implementation of IPPC including its provisions and standards is directly relevant to the national implementation of Art. 8(h) and other relevant articles and activities of the CBD and the further development of the CBD work programme on alien species. Furthermore it is directly relevant and overlaps with the apparent intention of the Interim Guiding Principles of the CBD.

19. **Notes** that many provisions and standards of the IPPC are directly relevant to, or overlap with, the apparent scope and intention of the Interim Guiding Principles of the CBD.

Relevant areas include:

- providing legal and regulatory frameworks;
- building capacity and technical assistance for developing countries;
- assessing and managing potential plant pest risks;
- protecting areas that may be threatened by plant pests;
- applying measures to prevent unintentional introduction of plant pests;
- certifying that risk management procedures have been applied;
- assessing and managing the intentional introduction of organisms that may be pests of plants including claimed beneficial and biological control organisms;
- exchanging of scientific and regulatory information relevant to plant pests;
- cooperating between countries to minimize the impact of plant pests;
- detecting, controlling, and eradicating pests in agricultural and wild flora.

20. **Notes** that in addition to IPPC provisions relevant to the Interim Guiding Principles of the CBD, the IPPC also has established standards and operational procedures developed from long experience in managing plant pest risk.

21. **Recommends** that clarification of the terminology and concepts used in, and the responsibilities imposed by, the Interim Guiding Principles be sought from the CBD.
22. **Strongly urges** NPPOs to communicate the scope and responsibility of the IPPC to officials in their countries involved in the CBD workplan on invasive species (including the Interim Guiding Principles).
23. **Recommends** that the Secretariat of the IPPC prepare a factual outline of the relationships between specific IPPC Articles and standards and the topics identified in the individual Interim Guiding Principles. This is intended to assist IPPC members in in-country consultations.

**THE NECESSITY OF DRAFTING INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR
PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES REGARDING ALIEN INVASIVE SPECIES**

24. **Notes** that environmental concerns related to plant pests are specified in International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) No. 2 *Guidelines for pest risk analysis*. Further detail is provided in the September 1999 draft ISPM *Pest risk analysis for quarantine pests* but needs further elaboration to help contracting parties better assess environmental concerns related to plant pests.
25. **Recommends** that the ICPM review standards as soon as possible to ensure that they adequately address environmental risks of plant pests.
26. **Recommends** that delay in the approval of the September 1999 draft ISPM *Pest risk analysis for quarantine pests* to allow further elaboration on environmental concerns related to plant pests should be avoided.
27. **Recommends** that in order to clarify the role of the IPPC and assist contracting parties with their rights and obligations, the ICPM develop a supplementary standard to the PRA standard addressing the environmental risks associated with plant pests as soon as possible.
28. **Recognizes** that under the IPPC's existing mandate, to take account of environmental concerns, further clarification should include consideration of the following five proposed points relating to potential environmental risks of plant pests:
- reduction or elimination of endangered (or threatened) native plant species;
 - reduction or elimination of a keystone plant species (a species which plays a major role in the maintenance of an ecosystem);
 - reduction or elimination of a plant species which is a major component of a native ecosystem;
 - causing a change to plant biological diversity in such a way as to result in ecosystem destabilization;
 - resulting in control, eradication or management programs that would be needed if a quarantine pest were introduced, and impacts of such programs (e.g. pesticides or release of non-indigenous predators and parasites) on biological diversity.

29. **Notes** that some countries use IPPC-PRA methodology and management systems for dealing with environmental impacts of plant pests mainly in the horticulture, agriculture and forestry sectors, but in accordance with the IPPC mandate, these systems are used more widely in other countries.

CAPACITY BUILDING REGARDING LMOS/PRODUCTS OF MODERN BIOTECHNOLOGY AND ALIEN INVASIVE SPECIES

The Working Group:

30. **Recommends** that countries identify capacity building needs in this area. The survey questionnaire available on the web site <<http://icpm.massey.ac.nz>> may be a useful aid to this process.

31. **Recommends** that LMOs/products of modern biotechnology, and relevant environmental risk issues be included in appropriate IPPC capacity building activities.

32. **Recommends** that the ICPM recognize the special needs of developing countries in this area and work to develop a program to address these needs.

33. **Recommends** that ICPM work with CBD and other relevant bodies to develop and deliver appropriate programs that meet the needs of countries in regard to common areas of interest.

COMMUNICATION REGARDING LMOS/PRODUCTS OF MODERN BIOTECHNOLOGY AND ALIEN INVASIVE SPECIES

The Working Group:

34. **Notes** that the 5th Conference of Parties meeting of the CBD requested the Secretariat of the CBD to cooperate with other international bodies such as the IPPC.

35. **Recommends** that when appropriate the Bureau and the Secretariat invite members of the ICPM to attend relevant meetings on behalf of the ICPM.

36. **Recommends** that the IPPC Secretariat seek observer status with the CBD for the IPPC in its own right.

37. **Recommends** that the IPPC Secretariat work closely with the CBD Secretariat and attend relevant CBD meetings, and that the CBD be invited by the IPPC Secretariat to attend relevant IPPC meetings.

38. **Recommends** that the IPPC Secretariat cooperate with other standard setting bodies to ensure that common areas of interest are adequately covered.

39. **Strongly urges** members of the ICPM to communicate IPPC interests and issues to in-country officials with responsibility for CBD matters, including the Subsidiary

Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), and issues dealing with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to ensure that the obligations under the IPPC are understood and considered as appropriate in developing positions. This includes:

- contacting the appropriate in-country officials;
- informing them of the IPPC and how those objectives are met by countries (legislation, policies, programs);
- outlining how and which standards for phytosanitary measures contribute to those objectives;
- assisting in-country preparations for CBD, SBSTTA, Cartagena Protocol and related activities.

40. **Recommends** that communication issues be addressed as part of the strategic planning process of the ICPM.

OTHER ISSUES

41. While not in the Terms of Reference of this meeting, the Working Group noted the need for additional funding for ICPM activities, including the Secretariat, and suggested Members take initiatives to explore options for funding specific programmes related to LMOs/products of modern biotechnology and invasive species.